

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1-32. (Cancelled)

33. (New) An apparatus comprising:

an ejection unit having a plurality of heads therein, each head having an inner passage therein, each head having a plurality of nozzles for ejecting fluid from the inner passage onto a workpiece;

a cap unit having a plurality of caps therein, the caps corresponding to the heads in the ejection unit;

an ejector device in fluid communication with at least one cap, said ejector device having a supply port and a suction port;

a fluid supply;

a fluid supply pipeline connecting the fluid supply to the supply port of the ejector device;

a flow rate regulating valve regulating a flow rate of the fluid supplied to the supply port of the ejector device;

a suction pipeline connected to the suction port of the ejector device;

a pressure detector detecting a pressure in the suction pipeline;

a suction pipeline gate valve in the suction pipeline; and

a controller connected to the pressure detector for selectively controlling the flow rate regulating valve and the suction pipeline gate valve as a function of the pressure detected by the pressure detector.

34. (New) The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the controller is adapted to maintain a substantially constant pressure in the suction pipeline by controlling the flow rate regulating valve according to the pressure detected by the pressure detector.

35. (New) The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the controller is adapted to increase flow through the suction pipeline by controlling the flow rate regulating valve after the pressure detected by the pressure detector falls below a predetermined pressure.

36. (New) The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the controller is adapted to reduce flow through the suction pipeline by controlling the flow rate regulating valve after the pressure detected by the pressure detector rises above a predetermined pressure.

37. (New) The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the controller is adapted to:
increase flow through the suction pipeline by controlling the flow rate regulating valve after the pressure detected by the pressure detector falls below a predetermined pressure; and

reduce flow through the suction pipeline by controlling the flow rate regulating valve after the pressure detected by the pressure detector rises above the predetermined pressure.

38. (New) The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the controller is adapted to maintain a substantially constant pressure in the suction pipeline by:

increasing flow through the suction pipeline by controlling the flow rate regulating valve after the pressure detected by the pressure detector falls below a predetermined pressure; and

reducing flow through the suction pipeline by controlling the flow rate regulating valve after the pressure detected by the pressure detector rises above the predetermined pressure.

39. (New) The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the controller is adapted to gradually close the flow rate regulating valve and the suction pipeline gate valve.